



**MEDIA RELEASE** Mpumalanga State of Province Address: PSA expectations

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**EMBARGO** None

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The Public Servants Association (PSA) has high expectations that Mpumalanga Premier, Mandla Ndlovu's, State of the Province Address will outline the provincial government's plans to address key concerns affecting the province.

A major concern is the state of unemployment in the province. Thousands of positions in provincial departments remain unfilled. There is a dire need to initiate a process to fill these vacancies as public servants in Mpumalanga are overworked owing to staff shortages, which negatively impacts on service delivery.

Despite discussions in collective bargaining units, the employer often lacks a clear mandate to resolve matters. The PSA urges the Premier to investigate and establish a meaningful negotiation structure. The PSA is also concerned about deteriorated buildings and inadequate equipment at some health facilities, especially in rural areas. Incomplete construction projects in the province must also be addressed, as this has a significant financial impact on government.

Basic education in Mpumalanga requires the Premier's attention. In 2023 there were several incidents where learners were attacked and robbed. The PSA expects the Premier to address the safety of learners and the state of schools, particularly in rural areas where dangerous pit toilets are still in use. Mpumalanga is also affected by rising crime. Border gates to neighbouring countries are exploited by criminals for illegal activities. The PSA requests the Premier to address illegal mining, which significantly impacts the province's finances. Car hijackings are also a major challenge, even affecting government vehicles, including ambulances. Poor street lighting in rural areas contributes to the high crime rate. Health facilities are not safe, with several recent robberies reported. It is the responsibility of the Mpumalanga Provincial Government to ensure a safe working environment for all employees and enhance security measures at all government institutions.

The Premier must further address the state of provincial roads. Many roads are in a poor condition and are not accessible for normal vehicles, which affects the income for the tourism sector. The PSA requests support from the Mpumalanga Department of Public Works, Roads, and Transport to improve roads. Initiatives to reinstate rail services in Mpumalanga should be considered to reduce truck traffic, which negatively impacts road lifespan. A significant concern is the Lebombo Border Gate, where trucks often form 55 km long queues on the N4 Highway towards the border.

Lastly, the approval of tenders for state departments, particularly security services, remains a significant concern. The PSA trust that the new Premier will scrutinise the use of tenders for security services and procurement at health facilities, where basic items such as food and cleaning materials are often overpriced. These issues must be tackled as they directly impact the citizens of the province.

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